

APPENDIX E2

Summary of responses by school

People allied to Park High School

Falling rolls

- Understand rolls are falling and surplus places are high
- Introduction of Birkenhead High School for Girls alongside Prenton has made the gender imbalance worse in mixed schools
- Just because there are rooms with chairs in doesn't mean there are surplus places
- Standards cannot be sustained when rolls are falling

Staff and Standards

- Standards are improving year on year at both schools
- Excellent ethos
- Pupils have a good rapport with staff
- Labelling both schools as National Challenge reinforces local snobbery against the schools
- A very good school
- Staff are very supportive and encouraging, give pupils best educational opportunities despite uncertainty
- My child went to the Sanderling Unit and the teachers helped him a lot
- Larger schools have worse GCSE results
- Concerns that class sizes would rise
- Concerns about loss of Sports specialism
- Concerns about the impact of amalgamation on GCSE results
- National Challenge is an arbitrary figure made up by Ed Balls
- National Challenge does not take into account socioeconomic background or grammar schools
- Last year 46% of pupils here passed English and 36% passed Maths
- Science has gone from 25% to over 80% C or above
- Park is not a failing school, it is unfair to staff to say so
- School educates some extremely challenging students to achieve the best possible grades
- Staff give up a lot of their time after school
- Standards will improve because of staff, parents and ethos, not buildings

- Inclusive school, takes anyone who wants to come
- Proud of Park
- Important that sporting links with the community are continued
- Concerns about compulsory redundancies

Pupils

- Children love coming to school here
- Concerns about disruption to childrens education
- I chose Park because of the Sports specialism, you are taking away my choice
- My school closed because of lack of numbers and it cocked up my education, you have to be very careful

Building and site

- Sports fields should not be sold or there will be no fit children
- What will happen to the community programme run from Park?
- When the other site closed there were 1100 pupils here and it felt crowded
- 700 to 800 pupils is a good number
- Have already had £10 million investment in the building
- Don't need material things to improve standards
- Prime location to serve the whole community
- Next to Birkenhead Park
- Good facilities thanks to PFI
- Schools are more than geographical physical sites

The Academy and Sponsors

- Could be a positive move for the children of both schools
- Not in favour of Academies, they're a political creation
- Sponsors will meddle with affairs of the classroom
- No connection between University of Chester and Park High School
- Only 50% of academies have been successful
- Forecasts for Ellesmere Port Academy are not evidence of success
- Concerned that Academy governing body will not represent local views
- Academy should keep elements of former schools best practice and good work including specialisms
- Can have confidence that the sponsor team will be successful
- Sponsors are enthusiastic and willing to make an even better school

The Proposal

- The Sanderling Unit should move to Park High School
- Pupil maps show that the Academy should be in central Birkenhead
- Ridgeway is too close to the edge of the area and too close to Woodchurch High
- Understand that the Academy will not be Park High
- Once in a lifetime opportunity for change
- Failure to act puts all schools at risk of a crisis in numbers
- Would the Academy be a large school?
- School would have a lot more pupils for three years which will mess up my child's education
- Will be massive redundancies in three years as the number on roll falls
- Proposal is a lifeline to Rock Ferry at the expense of Park

Alternative options

- Should close Rock Ferry High and leave Park open
- Neither school should be closed

The Process

- Children should come first not money
- This is about the community, must set aside the interests of individual schools
- We should have known about this when we were choosing secondary school options
- Consultation presentation told us nothing
- Should know what the Academy would be like before you close the schools
- Staff don't know what's going on, there has been three proposals so far
- Birkenhead High School for Girls should have closed, it was a failing business
- No point opposing the proposals because the consultation is a sham

Traffic and transport

- Rock Ferry pupils will not travel to Park, there are closer schools like Bebington, Prenton and Plessington

Financial

- This is all about selling the land at Rock Ferry High to make money
- If schools need money the government should give them money
- Better to get a substantial investment than no investment

Other Comments

- Heart of the community
- Generations have come to this school

People allied to Rock Ferry High School

Falling rolls

- New housing estates are being built which means more children
- You have already taken away The Dell Primary School
- Parents who would come here are put off by the closure consultation
- Pupils are haemorrhaging from Rock Ferry because they don't want to go to Park
- Understand the demographic issues and reasons why change is necessary
- Falling rolls mean schools have to close
- There is more competition for nursery places now
- Why is it acceptable for Birkenhead High School for Girls to have 100 pupils per year group and not for Park High and Rock Ferry High?
- Surplus space could be used for community purposes
- We lose a lot of kids to Bebington High School
- Numbers have fallen because Birkenhead schools do not have sixth forms
- If Rock Ferry was an Academy more kids would come here

Staff and Standards

- Good links with the community
- After school dance and drama classes are well attended
- Standards are improving
- CVA is good
- Teachers are passionate
- Small schools are better because they have small classes
- Sanderling Unit is very successful
- Excellent school
- Media have reported that Rock Ferry is failing, this is not the case
- Concerns about loss of staff expertise at Sanderling Unit
- Concerns about loss of Performing Arts College specialism
- Concern about continuity of GCSE courses for existing pupils
- No other schools do GCSE Dance and Performing Arts
- Both schools have good Ofsted reports

- Grammar schools cream off the best pupils which means results are not as good as other similarly disadvantaged schools in the country
- Small schools have smaller teaching groups
- Council letter to parents hinted that Park were not as failing as Rock Ferry, which has planted a seed of worry in the community
- How are you going to merge two staff rooms?

Building and site

- Only green space in the area
- Wonderful art deco architecture
- At 24 acres, a larger site than Park, more flexible
- Easy access to bus and rail routes at Rock Ferry
- Both schools are on sites with room for development
- New is not necessarily best
- You could build an Academy at Rock Ferry without any disruption to children
- Rock Ferry is surrounded by houses and shops so there is always help available if it is needed
- Park site is too small, very cramped and unfit for purpose
- Park site has been chosen for purely financial reasons, you owe money
- The Park site will undermine the sponsors vision
- Park High may have been refurbished but you can't tell from its decorative state
- Park site is satisfactory but it's location is not suitable for Rock Ferry parents
- Park's architecture is antiquated and cannot expand outwards, what if it needs to be expanded in 20 years time?
- Building Schools for the Future is about new build not refurbishment
- Will Sanderling Unit have it's own building?
- Building work at Park site will be disruptive for years
- Academy should have adult education and lifelong learning facilities
- A lot of outside groups use Rock Ferry High School, what will happen to them
- Rock Ferry site could accommodate community facilities, Sure Start, health care, mental health care, social services etc
- Park site does not allow for future expansion
- Rock Ferry has had a lot of money spent on it and could be refurbished further

- Ravenswood is an 1874 manor house, it will be stripped and demolished

Pupils

- Pupils love coming to school
- Pupils would go to another school rather than the Academy and would miss out on the benefits
- Concerns about disruption to children in Key Stage 4
- Concerns about integration of Sanderling Unit pupils into mainstream classes and vulnerability of pupils
- Sanderling pupils are the most vulnerable and need great care planning their futures
- Change should not be at the expense of children's education
- More boys than girls in a class will disadvantage girl's education
- I chose this school because of the Performing Arts college status, you are taking away my choice
- If I had wanted Park High I would have sent my child there
- There would be more lateness and truancy if children had to travel further to school
- New build would raise children's self-esteem
- There's more overlap between Rock Ferry and Bebington than between Rock Ferry and Park High
- I moved school in my O level year and it was an absolute nightmare
- My child is settled here
- Children are well behaved coming out of school

The Academy and Sponsors

- Academy will be Park High with a new badge
- Academy will benefit the community
- Sponsorship team is tremendous, strong and impressive
- Happy with the University of Chester as lead sponsor
- Will breathe new life into the system
- Sponsors are suitable and have made a favourable impression
- The Academy will reach the ambitions and targets needed in education
- Links with HE and FE and Local Authority support are invaluable and will provide the best opportunities for pupils
- Staff at both schools are ready willing and able to play their parts
- There has been no consultation about the proposed specialism

- The Academy should have a sixth form
- The Academy should go from age 4 upwards

The Proposal

- Why deprive a deprived area of it's school and disadvantage it further
- This is just the closure of Rock Ferry by another name
- Changing the sign at Park High will make no difference, it is an in name only change
- Standards at the Academy will stay low if it is at Park
- Taking away parental choice
- Don't waste money on new build when established schools can be transformed into ultra modern sites
- Should stop intake and let the existing children and staff stay on site until all the children have finished, then transfer staff
- A school 5 miles away will not feel like our school
- This is a silly idea, there will be trouble
- Proposal is a missed opportunity for transformational change
- This is hastily and poorly thought out
- Should not have to settle for the second best cheap compromise option
- Rock Ferry would have no secondary school for boys
- Politicians lack ambition, this is short sighted
- It will be "them and us"
- Academies that have failed have been in existing premises
- Sponsors would prefer to work on a fresh canvas, this will hinder their academic vision
- Either Rock Ferry closes and has nothing, or it joins with Park High to form a new Academy
- Are parents who don't want to travel to Park guaranteed a place at a different local school?
- Got to think about the next 50 years

Alternative options

- Make both schools smaller academies
- If the Academy was at Rock Ferry there would be no conflict as to whose school it is
- There is room at Rock Ferry to build an Academy
- Why can't it be built on a site closer to my house?
- This area deserves a state of the art new build as promised

- New purpose built “superschool” will provide vision, optimism and ambition
- Should find a neutral site equidistant between the two schools
- An extended search for appropriate venues is required
- All £30 million should be spent on a new school, not £10 million on a paint job
- Both schools should stay open as small schools
- Should stick to the original “three into two” plan
- Should move Prenton High to Rock Ferry and establish a Mixed Academy at Prenton High site
- Why can't it be built on the Shaftesbury site?
- You should ask Shaftesbury again now that David Hughes has withdrawn
- A small number of residents and a youth club should not compromise educational opportunities for generations to come
- Should move Acre Lane to the Park High site
- Shaftesbury site was never a deliverable option
- What other sites were looked at?
- Find the land, make it happen
- Take over the whole of the Priory commercial site which is near to transport hubs

Traffic and transport

- Pupils from Park High would not come here
- Concerns about distance to Park site
- Concerned about safety of children travelling home after dark
- Park Road North is dark and has trees, children could be attacked on the way home
- Most people in this area do not drive
- It is unfair to expect children to travel out of the area to Park High site or Bebington High
- Parents cannot afford travel costs
- Will there be free transport to the Academy?
- We chose Rock Ferry High because it is within walking distance
- No pupil is in walking distance of Park site
- This is against the Council's green policies as pupils will not be able to walk to school
- Park is on the other side of the Wirral

- Pupils and parents will not be able to attend after school activities unless they have their own transport
- Bussing children to Park site is possible
- Truancy will go up if children have to travel in the dark and rain
- Why is it difficult for the children from the north end of Birkenhead to travel south, but not difficult for the children from the south of Birkenhead to travel north

Financial

- Why is money being spent on Birkenhead High School for Girls? Wouldn't it be better spent here?
- This is all about making profit from selling Rock Ferry's land
- Will pupils have to have a new uniform?
- Investment in this area is long overdue
- Understand that schools are not financially viable with falling rolls
- Funding has already been allocated for Park High, but not for Rock Ferry, you have already made your decision

The Process

- You should put children and community first
- Parents should have been consulted earlier
- There were a lot more people at the Rock Ferry meeting than at the Park meeting and most of those were staff
- This is all about saving money
- This is not a child focussed decision
- Have other secondary school heads, staff and parents been consulted?
- Will everyone's views be made public?
- Have parents at the five local primary schools been consulted?
- How has the local community been consulted, as many people do not get free papers?
- A poster in the library does not constitute consultation
- Consultation should have been better and wider
- As a local resident I didn't know about the original proposal
- Why are consultation meetings not open to the public?
- You should not rush this through just for political expediency
- Needs more consultation with residents associations
- Council's letters to parents were biased towards Park
- You have already made your decision

- There are two girls schools at the cost of a mixed school closing

Other comments

- Generations have gone to this school
- Open for 80 years
- Rock Ferry has lost Byrne Avenue, what will be left if the school closes
- Both schools are old and well established
- Life expectancy is 10 years below other parts of Wirral
- Pupils are entitled to a local school

Other people

Falling rolls

- Pupils are transferring out of Rock Ferry because they don't want to go to Park
- New housing estates are being built which means more children
- How many children are on roll at both schools now?
- In London schools have closed, only to build new ones
- Why aren't smaller schools viable?
- Is the roll going to rise again?
- Would a lottery system help the falling roll situation?
- Understand the need to reduce schools because of the falling birth rate

Staff and Standards

- Sanderling Unit is very successful
- Rock Ferry has made progress over the years, confirmed by Ofsted
- Rock Ferry has its fair share of SEN pupils who are well served
- Need a good ratio of staff to pupils
- Small is beautiful
- Both schools are hugely successful, combining them will create a world class education
- What will happen to the Sanderling Unit?
- Learning and teaching is not just about exam results
- Qualifications guarantee nothing
- Concerns about loss of specialisms
- What would the class sizes be in the Academy?
- Concerns about breaking up good staff teams

- More boys than girls which has an effect on standards
- All schools have to raise their game to compete in the world economy

Building and site

- Park site is restricted with no room for expansion
- There is more potential at the Rock Ferry site
- Park High is spread across two sites
- Rock Ferry site can accommodate all the pupils from both schools in September 2010
- Both schools are underutilised, in industry you would close one site not both
- Are the main building at Rock Ferry and Ravenswood listed?
- What would happen to memorials and trees at the Rock Ferry site?
- Rock Ferry is a lung for the area with extensive grounds and playing fields
- Money spent refurbishing Rock Ferry would be wasted
- Who do Rock Ferry's land and buildings belong to?
- Are there any tree preservation orders?
- Both buildings are old
- Has the Council had any government advice about the condition and suitability of Park High as an Academy?

Pupils

- Sanderling unit pupils hate change and would not survive in a mainstream school setting
- Pupils would be anonymous in a large Academy

The Academy and Sponsors

- Academy is the way forward
- Support the sponsors
- Need to keep pace with educational advancement
- Academy should have dynamic leadership, be child focussed and inspirational and aspirational in ethos
- Children will benefit immensely from an academy
- Does the specialism mean our children are just being made ready for the service industry?
- The specialism assumes there is no culture in the area
- There is no business sponsor, isn't this essential for their financial contribution?

- How will sponsors pay for the new school if they have budget cuts?
- Suggest Birkenhead Institute Academy as the name

The Proposal

- Must look to the future
- Anything other than a new school is an insult to the children and tax payers of Wirral
- Short changing and fobbing off the children of Birkenhead by being educated in a less than adequate building just because of PFI
- What will happen to community facilities?
- Will the Academy merge with Birkenhead High School Academy as they are so close together?
- Most people seem to be in favour of the Academy by not the move away from Rock Ferry
- The combined roll is much higher than the 750 Academy number, what will happen to the additional pupils
- If Park High closes, does the land revert to park land?
- What happens when TUPE finishes?
- Will staff be paid below national rates, if so will only mediocre staff be attracted
- Different rates of pay for the same job is not conducive to good team working
- Concerns about damage done in running a school down in transition period
- Closing Rock Ferry High school is an act of pure vandalism
- We want good schools for boys in the area
- Must not make a decision that puts pressure on Ridgeway

Alternative options

- Should be a new building not make do and mend
- Should find a neutral site equidistant between the two schools
- If there are no other sites, should build the Academy at Rock Ferry
- All £30 million should be spent on a new state of the art school
- School should be centrally located
- Should keep Rock Ferry open
- Could Park be closed if it's in a PFI contract to 2031?
- Park site could be used by Wirral Metropolitan College which has increasing student numbers given the recession
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Traffic and transport

- Pupils would not travel miles to a new school
- Truancy would go up
- Carbon footprint would go up
- People want local schools where they live
- How will children get to Park site?
- Increased travel distance to Park, particularly dark in winter months
- Would the Council pay for buses and for how long?
- Lines of communication will be stretched
- Where do pupils live now?
- Concerns about distance to Park site

Financial

- This is a finance led agenda
- Understand Council needs to make cuts but should look at the long term
- Rock Ferry High School is a prime piece of land for residential development
- Cost of new uniforms
- Has the Council considered the cost of redundancies and early retirements?
- Has the government withdrawn the £30 million for the new Academy?
- Are property developers involved?

The Process

- You should put children and community first
- Academy consultation meeting was not what I expected, only had 15 minutes to respond in small groups
- Why was Ridgeway dropped from the original proposal?
- Can the consultation be extended past 7th April?
- Can school governors prevent schools from closing?
- How would a change of government affect the proposals?
- You've already made a decision behind closed doors
- Consultation is a sham

Other comments

- Generations have gone to this school
- Would regret seeing the school's name disappear

- People are proud of their school
- Rock Ferry will be the poorer if the school closes
- What will happen to the land at Rock Ferry, will our property be overlooked?
- This is an area of high social and financial deprivation
- Politicians should band together to prevent schools from closing
- Birkenhead Institute closed due to falling numbers despite it's rich local history